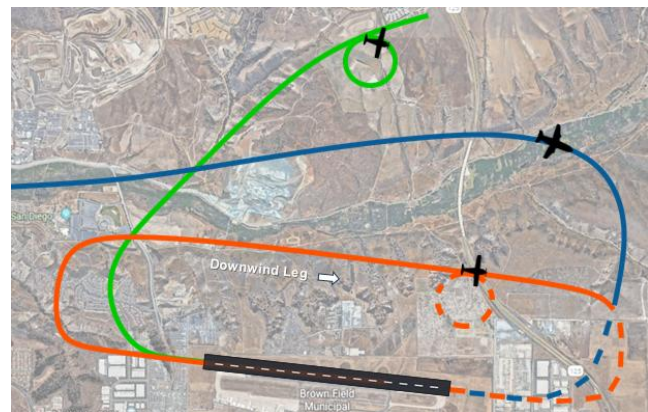


On August 16, 2015 near a small airport south of San Diego California, a mid-air collision took place between a business jet and a small single-engine airplane. The events leading up to the accident involved three pilots, three airplanes, and a somewhat confused air traffic controller. The first pilot, whom I will call “Green Pilot” was flying a small single-engine Cessna 172. The second pilot – I’ll call him “Orange Pilot” was also flying a single-engine Cessna 172. The third pilot was flying business jet and I’ll call him “Blue Pilot”.

Green Pilot had taken off from the airport and was about a mile north of the airport heading northeast with the intent of leaving the area. Orange Pilot was practicing takeoffs and landings, so he took off with the intent of landing again on the other end of the same runway. After takeoff, he turned right, then right again in order to enter what is called the “downwind leg” of the traffic pattern. He would be flying about a half mile north of and parallel to the runway as he flies toward the approach end of the runway. Blue Pilot was about 3 miles west of the airport heading east towards the airport with the intent of landing as well. So we have three airplanes, one leaving the airport heading northeast, and two other airplanes, the slow moving Cessna and the much faster business jet both planning to land on the same runway.

As Orange Pilot made his way toward the east end of the runway, he was passed on the left by Blue Pilot, but since it takes the faster moving jet a lot more distance to turn, Blue Pilot was about a half mile to the left of Orange Pilot and therefore had about half again as much distance to cover before reaching the runway.

Anticipating a conflict, the air traffic controller decided to instruct Orange Pilot to fly a maneuver that would slow him down and thus give Blue Pilot plenty of time to land in front of Orange Pilot, but when the controller made the radio call, he used the wrong call sign. Instead of calling Orange Pilot, he called Green Pilot and instructed him to “make a right 360 and rejoin the downwind” – a common spacing maneuver.



At this point it is important to know two things: 1) in aviation, when a pilot or controller makes a radio call, everyone pilot in the vicinity of the airport hears it, and 2) all pilots are responsible for making sure their airplane does not hit another airplane. Why? Because there are no fender-benders in the air. Mid-air collisions usually result in the death of everyone on each plane.

So when the controller gave the “360” instruction, Green Pilot – who was flying a Cessna 172, dutifully complied with the instruction though he surely wondered why he had been told to “rejoin the downwind” since he was not landing at the airport but was instead leaving the airport vicinity.

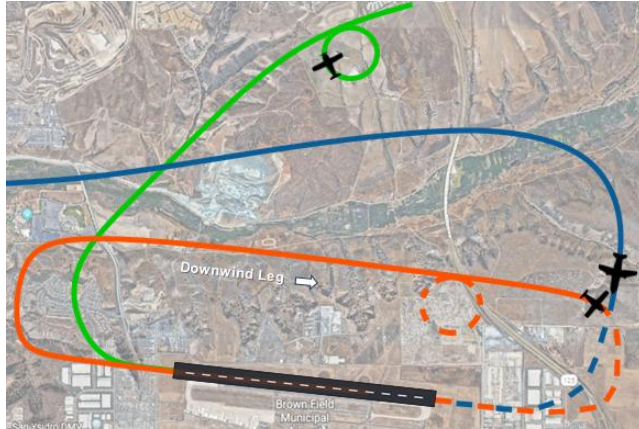
On the other hand, Orange Pilot – who was also flying a Cessna 172 and was surely aware of the fact that a faster moving jet was intending to land on the same runway he was planning to land on, did not ask the controller if the “360” instruction that had been given to the departing Cessna 172 pilot might have been intended for him. Therefore he kept heading toward the approach end of the runway.

Meanwhile, Blue Pilot was now well ahead of Orange Pilot and turned right in order to set up for the final approach. Though he knew that the Cessna 172 was out there intending to land on the same runway, he



could not find it. But instead of questioning the controller as to its location, he kept heading toward the runway.

By the time the controller realized he had given the “360” instructions to the wrong pilot, the Cessna on downwind had collided with the business jet. The pilot on the Cessna died as well as did the pilot and three passengers in the business jet.



What caused this accident to happen? No doubt that if the controller had given the “360” instructions to the correct pilot, the accident would not have happened. It is also likely that if the two pilots who were intending to land had been more concerned about their own safety and the safety of their passengers, they would have queried the controller as to the whereabouts of the other airplane and would have taken action to make sure they did not hit each other. The evidence indicates that those two pilots did not maintain Situational Awareness.

Situational Awareness is - according to Wikipedia –

“the perception of environmental elements and events with respect to time or space, the comprehension of their meaning, and the projection of their future status.”

This basically means that you are aware of what is going on around you, and based on their trend, you determine where they are going to be in a certain time frame. In aviation terms, situational awareness is:

- being aware of the fixed obstacles in your general vicinity (mountains, towers, thunderstorms, etc.)
- being aware of the altitude and direction of flight of other airplanes in your general vicinity
- knowing what your options are in the event of a perceived conflict

It is somewhat like driving a car. When we were taught to drive, we were probably taught to watch the oncoming traffic and to know what we were going to do in the event that traffic moved into our lane.

In this message, we’re going to discuss “spiritual” Situational Awareness, especially in regards to America’s quickly changing culture and its view of God. We are going to 1) see where we were culturally 75 years ago, 2) follow the cultural trend so we know where we are today and where the culture is heading, and 3) see what we can do to help our children avoid a cultural conflict.

America in the 21st Century

America was founded as a God-fearing nation. It is in all of our founding documents and is evident in our history. Though there have been a number of spiritual ups and downs through the years, our country has always maintained the Judeo-Christian culture up until about 50 years ago when it entered an almost unrecoverable downward spiral as a result of a Supreme Court decision that was based on an unconstitutional doctrine called ‘judicial review’. That decision was that school prayer in public schools was unconstitutional¹.

For a little background ... In the years following World War II, America was for the most part, a grateful nation. Churches and synagogues were filled each week as people remembered how God had interceded for our country during that terrible war. It was un-common for a person to not believe in the

¹ Engel v. Vitale on June 25, 1962, and Abington **School** District v. Schempp on June 17, 1963



God of the Bible. Each morning, after the Pledge of Allegiance, teachers would lead their students in a prayer. In High School, a prayer was oftentimes given over the intercom. Schools never had a second thought about the legality of having Christmas parties, doing Christmas band concerts, and coloring eggs as a craft for Easter ... and for the most part, our nation was blessed. Though Christianity was in some ways misguided, nevertheless, that was our culture.

That all changed in 1963 as government began to be expel God from the schools. Without God in the schools, a vacuum was created. Using the Bible to answer questions like “where did the earth come from?” and “why are people different from animals” was no longer acceptable. It was said that you cannot properly address these questions using a book of “myths and fables” as the Bible was sometimes called. You have to use “truth, facts, science”. So “science” and the “theory of evolution” were introduced to fill the vacuum created by the expulsion of the Bible.

This came about at about the same time as the beginning of the “free love” hippie movement, a movement designed to separate the state from sexual matters such as marriage, adultery, birth control, and sexual preference. It was taught that any consensual sexual relationship should not be regulated by the state.

For years, the states had made laws pertaining to sexual behavior and relationships, most of which were based on Judeo-Christian values. These included laws that forbid sodomy, bestiality, and sexual relationships with minors. There were also laws designed to make it difficult to get a divorce, and of course, there were laws against abortion. The “Free Love” movement began to tear these down, and with the Bible no longer being considered to be the source of moral authority, it was not that difficult to rip these long-standing institutions from our culture. Thus began – in earnest – the age of “moral relativism”, the belief that moral authority was cultural. That opened the door to an even broader view of morality called “personal moral relativism”, a belief that one’s personal opinions, desires, and beliefs should be his moral authority. This view on morality has coined statements such as:

- You have your truth, and I have mine
- Truth is what I believe to be true
- You do your thing, and I’ll do mine.

The absurdity of this kind of thinking is obvious. It’s like saying that it is OK to kidnap a young lady because you want her to be your wife, or to cite a more extreme position, it’s OK for a leader to kill 6 million of his own citizens because he believes it will be good for the country.

Free love, moral relativism, and personal relativism has brought our country to where we are today, and it pretty much started in 1963 when our leaders kicked God out of the classroom. Because of these views, we have seen a skyrocketing increase in divorce, unwed mothers, abortion, homosexuality, and other types of damaging behavior. Many believe that the scourge of mass shootings our nation has witnessed over the past 20 years is also an outgrowth of this type of thinking.

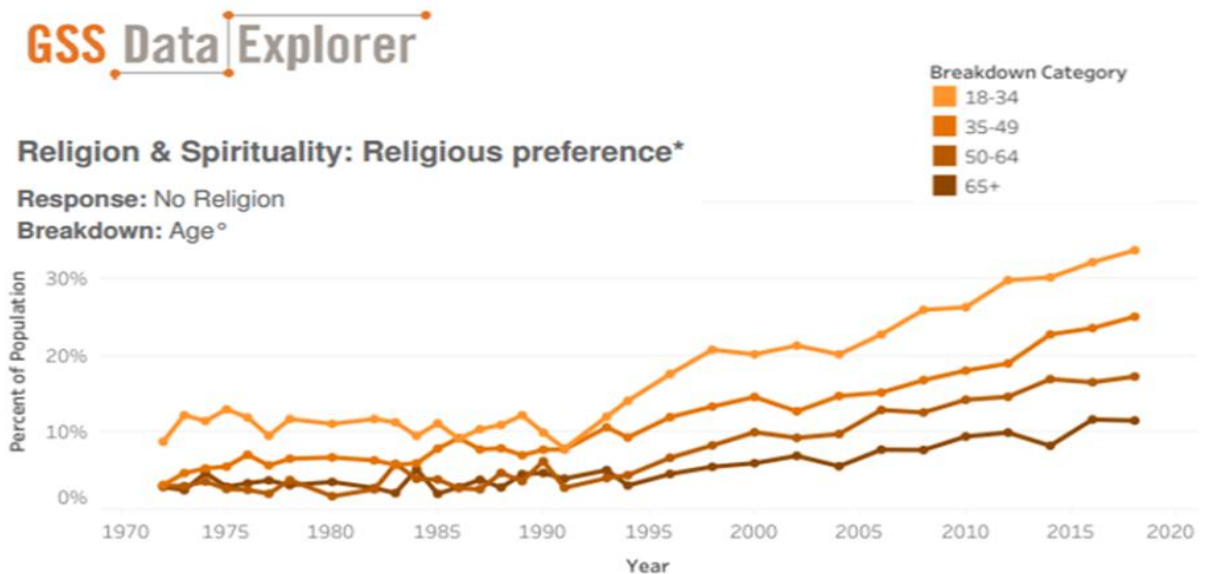
It’s interesting to note that the rise of these alternative views of morality seem to coincide with the rise of those who say they have no religious affiliation. The National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago is one of the largest independent social research organizations in the United States. It hosts a service called the General Social Survey (GSS) that is available on the internet². Begun in 1972, it monitors trends in American Society and supplies its findings on the internet free of charge.

In its continuing survey of religion in America, it asks participants “What is your Religious Preference?”. The responses can be charted on a graph. One of the options is “None” which basically means that you are indifferent to God. The graph for the None’s shows a somewhat horizontal line of about 8% of the

² <https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org>



population from the year 1972 till about 1993. From there it starts climbing until it reaches 23% in 2017 which is most recent year of the survey.



When you look at the same graph divided into four age groups, the line for those who are age 18-34 remained flat at about 10% until 1993, then it started a steep climb till the year 1999, follow by a slight reduction for about 4 years, then a steady climb to 34% in 2017.

Those in the 18-34 age group who were surveyed in 1993 were born between the years 1959 and 1975 which means they started school between 1965 and 1981. These were the years when God and school prayer were being phased out and evolution along with its various “isms” was being phased into the public school curriculum.

Another GSS survey that is somewhat telling is that of those who strongly approve of homosexual marriage. This survey was first taken in 1988, then every-other year after beginning in 2004. The first survey was taken in 1988 presumably as a response to a mass same-sex wedding ceremony that took place at the National Mall in Washington, DC. It appears that no subsequent survey was taken until 2004 when a number of states began passing laws either allowing or banning same-sex marriage after a Washington Post poll showed that the nation was evenly split on the issue. Then in 2015, the Supreme Court struck down all same-sex marriage bans.

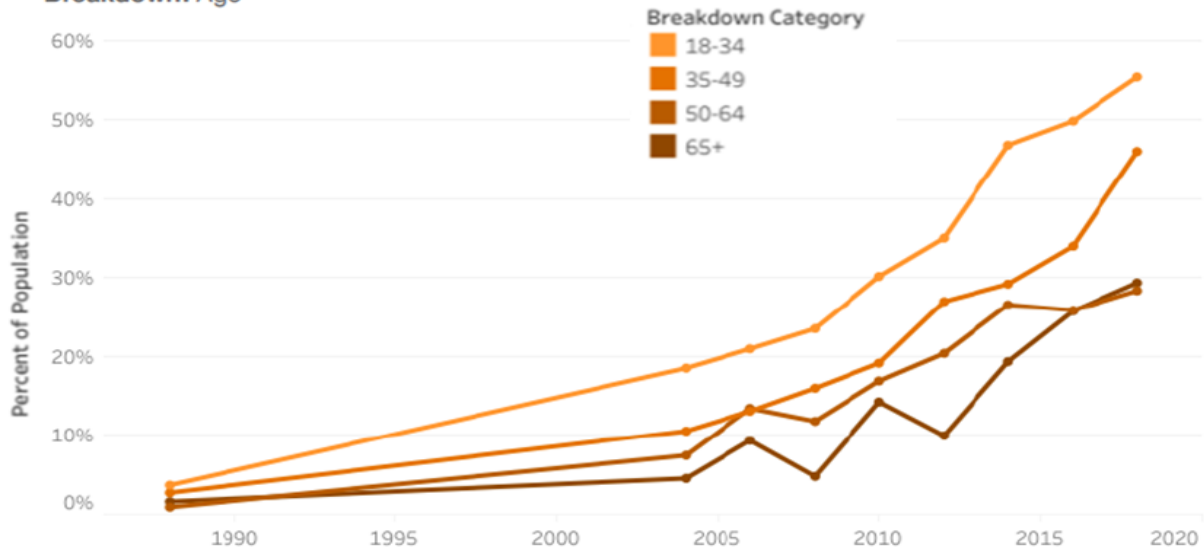


GSS Data Explorer

Gender & Marriage: Homosexuals should have right to marry (agree/disagree)

Response: Strongly agree

Breakdown: Age^o



Notice the sharp rise in acceptance of those who were in the 35-49 age group. These people started school in the early 70's up through the mid to late 80's – the latter years of the hippie era.

From the graph we can see that those who were in their formative years anywhere from the mid 60's on are the ones who were more in favor of this ungodly behavior.

So this gives us a condensed view of what is going on around us. Roughly 30% of the people age 18 – 50 claim no religious preference, and over 50% of those in the same age group are OK with homosexual marriage. We must keep in mind that the 50% who approve of homosexual marriage probably includes some who claim to be religious Christians or religious Jews.

It is not like it used to be back in the early 60's. We, as parents and believers cannot count on the assumption that our neighbors, our friends, our children's teachers, and even our extended family members are all believers in the Judeo-Christian God of Israel. Indifference to God and the resultant abandonment of Biblical morality is fostering the rise of moral relevance in our society and especially with young people.

Israel in Joshua's Day

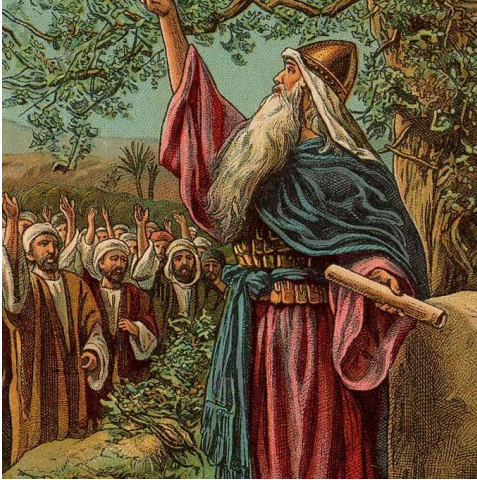
Where our country is today is much the same as it was in the days after Israel became a settled nation. The Israelite people had fought many wars in their quest to rid the Promised Land of the Canaanites. As the wars wound down, the tribes received their inheritance and got down to the business of living their lives. But Joshua perceived that the culture was already beginning to change for the worse.

Joshua understood the Israelite people. Through the years, he had witnessed their willingness to turn back to the gods of the Egyptians. He saw how they had rebelled against YHVH by making the golden calf. He saw how quickly they were willing to return to Egypt after the testimony of the twelve spies, and he witnessed numerous other rebellions as they wandered for 38 years in the wilderness. Joshua had come to realize that it did not take much prodding to get them to forsake YHVH and turn to other gods. So



after all the tribes of Israel had been given their inheritance, and as he was nearing the end of his life, Joshua said to the leaders of Israel.

^{ESV} **Joshua 24:14** "Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.



Unfortunately, much of the impact of his statement is lost in the translation and without the context. Though I'll be talking more about this in a moment, the context is that Joshua had shown the leaders that YHVH is greater than all the other 'gods', whether they be Egyptian and Canaanite. And how did he show it? Simply by reminding the leaders that YHVH had overthrown all of them. Therefore, the leaders of Israel should throw away their worthless 'gods'.

How do we know that Israel had already succumbed to the temptation to worship other Gods? Let's begin by looking at the phrase "put away". That phrase comes from the

Hebrew word 'suwr' (סוּר – 5493) and it means "to turn

aside, depart, to remove". The first place it is used in scripture is in the Genesis 8:13 (KJV) where it says that Noah "removed" the covering from the ark. Using that meaning we see that Joshua told the leaders of Israel to serve the greater god (YHVH) and to "remove" any affinity they might have to any other god, thus implying that they actually did have an affinity to other gods.

Their reply to Joshua was much like that of a child who was caught with his hand in the cookie jar. "Who, Me?"³ the child says as he hides his chocolate covered hand behind his back. "Do you believe we are serving any God besides YHVH?" Apparently they were, at least some of them, otherwise Joshua would not have preceded their response by saying –

^{ESV} **Joshua 24:15** "... choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Apparently, the leaders of Israel could not make up their mind. If they had, there would have been no reason for Joshua to tell them to 'choose'. In fact Joshua went on to say (vs. 19) that the people could not at that time even serve YHVH because YHVH is a jealous God, implying again that even at that moment, they had a desire to serve other Gods. So he said to them again –

^{ESV} **Joshua 24:23** "...put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel."

As biblical history points out, within a very few years of Joshua's death, the Israelites had for the most part turned away from YHVH and had begun to worship the Canaanite gods. What Joshua had perceived would happen, did happen.

What about Joshua's children? Did they fall into the trap of idolatry? Though we have no Biblical record of Joshua's family, we can assume he did have one based on the phrase "as for my house, WE will serve ..." We can also assume that Joshua's immediate family and his grandchildren did not get caught up in

³ their response (Josh. 24:16) is derived from the Hebrew word "chaliylay" (חַלִּילָיָה – 2486) is similar to saying "God forbid".



Israel's cultural change. Why? Because Joshua had long before chosen YHVH as his God. It was a no-brainer - the evidence was clear. YHVH had proven to be greater than all the pseudo gods of the nations, and we can assume that he taught the existence of the greater god to his children.

Joshua perceived the signs of the times. His keen **Situational Awareness** led him to teach his family about God and how to avoid the cultural revolution that was soon to take place.

Like Israel in Joshua's day, God is being pushed out and replaced by the foreign god of moral relativism. Our children are giving up the belief in the God who carried our nation for so many years, and are turning to a 'god' that is not God. What can we do to help our children avoid moral relativism and becoming a "none", a person who is indifferent to God? I believe we should follow Joshua's example. We should watch to see what is happening, then teach our children about God.

See and Avoid

In the world of aviation, the primary way of keeping airplanes from hitting each other is called "See and Avoid". That might seem strange being that we are living in such a technologically advanced age, but when you think about it, what is more technologically advanced than the human eye and brain. The theory behind See and Avoid is that pilots do not want to die, and therefore do not trust their lives to technology that can fail and to controllers sitting in air conditioned offices on the ground. Therefore, a safe pilot will use all available technology to increase his Situational Awareness and couple that with his eyes to verify that what he believes to be the case is actually true.

See and Avoid can also be the primary way of insulating your family from the encroaching culture of godlessness and moral relevance. We have to know what our family members are doing, what they are watching, what they are reading, and even who they are talking to.

In the proverb of the 'Chiyil' (virtuous) Woman, it says of her –

^{NKJ} **Proverbs 31:27** She watches over the ways of her household . . .

In Hebrew, this passage is "saphia halikot betah" : three Hebrew words 'tsaphah' (צָפָה – 6822), 'halikah' (הַלִּיקָה – 1979), and 'bahyit' (בַּיִת – 1004). 'Tsaphah' means to 'watch closely, to spy'. 'Halikot' is the feminine plural form of 'halikah' which is the way one walks, and 'bahyit' is of course 'the house'.

In other words, the virtuous woman pays close attention to what is going on in her house. This obviously applies to virtuous men as well.

Children's minds are like sponges, they soak up all the information that is available. Therefore virtuous parents must keep tabs on what everyone in the house is doing, seeing, hearing, and saying. In other words, they must observe their children's 'walk'. For example, does one of the children seem to have a strange point of view in the evening's family dinner discussion? Does the ten year old son come home from school asking questions that are usually reserved for adults? Does a homework assignment require a child to do things you would not approve of? A virtuous parent will notice these deviations from the family's values and address them before things get out of hand. In a nutshell, parents have to "see" what is going on in their home, steer their children away from incorrect thoughts and activities, and toward what is wholesome and good, thereby helping them avoid pitfalls later in their lives. That is where education comes in.

Educate

Though I just said that children's minds are like sponges, that is not entirely accurate. Children's minds more closely resemble vacuum cleaners. They go around looking for information to suck in. That's why we put locks on our lower cabinet doors ... the kids just want to see what's behind the door. That being the case, we can use it to our advantage by teaching them about God early in life.



When I was a young person, practically everything I learned about God was from what I absorbed at church. Since sermons were pretty much aimed at adults, I learned a lot about the Law of God – specifically the Sabbath and the festivals. I learned about the Kingdom of God, and I learned about the Church of God. I also heard numerous sermons about how to raise ‘godly children’, and in practically every sermon you would hear the passage -

“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”

I’m sure you have all heard that passage before; it is Proverbs 22:6. It was oftentimes used to express the idea that if you teach children about the Sabbath, the Holy Days, clean and unclean foods, etc. that they would continue in that way as they grow older and eventually establish their own homes, and in many cases – including myself - it worked. But it did not work for everyone, and in fact roughly half the children in my childhood church left the walk soon after high school, even after programs were established to help keep them “in the church”.

What went wrong? Was it the parents? The church? After pondering this question for many years, I’ve come to believe that the problem was with our understanding of the word “train”.

The word ‘train’ in the above passage comes from the Hebrew word ‘chanak’ (חָנַךְ – 2596) which is the verbal root of the word ‘Chanukah’- the Feast of Dedication. So instead of ‘training’ a child in the way, we should really ‘dedicate’ the child to the way. This goes beyond simply teaching about the Sabbath, it means dedicating our children to be Sabbath keepers; and when it comes to God, we have to do more than just teach them about God, we have to dedicate them to really love, honor, and appreciate God.

So how do we do that? We first have to show them that God really does exist, and then show how we are related to Him.

Proving the Existence of God

Most people learn about God via emotion. They learn that “God is love”, that “Jesus loves me”, and that God has made promises and commitments to His people. But promises, commitments, and stories of God’s love are meaningless if the hearer is not convinced that God really does exist. Therefore it is important that we prove to ourselves and to our children that God certainly does exist, and the scriptures provide the way.

When introducing the fall of Israel shortly after the death of Joshua, the writer says

^{NKJ} **Judges 2:10** When all (Joshua’s) generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.

God shows that He exists by the work that He does. For the generation mentioned above, because they were not witnesses to the events of the exodus, they lost sight of God. Obviously, that generation was rather shortsighted, because even though they did not actually witness the exodus, they were the beneficiaries of the blessings that came about as a result of it.

The story of the exodus is the most common way God describes Himself in scripture. He uses it over and over in the Torah, and so did Joshua. As the end of Joshua’s life drew near, he summoned all the leaders of Israel together and said to them - .

^{ESV} **Joshua 24:2-5** ... "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. ³ Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac. ⁴ And to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. And I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to



Egypt. ⁵ And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in the midst of it, and afterward I brought you out.”

Though I stopped in verse 5, Joshua continued to recite the history of the Hebrew people all the way to their present day. He reminded them of all YHVH had done for them, and he pointed out the evidence of those things. Joshua also reminded them that they -

^{ESV} **Joshua 23:14** "... know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed.

Because these people actually saw God in action, and knew that God did everything He said He would do, Joshua expected his Israelite brothers to maintain their dedication to Him.

“But we don’t live in that day” you might say. This is true, but just because we did not actually witness the events of the Bible, we can still prove that God exists. God doesn’t expect us to believe in Him because of blind faith. He gives us concrete evidence of His existence, and there are many sources that can lead you to that evidence. I’ll list a few:

- The website “answersingenesis.org” has a wealth of information concerning creation and the flood. You can also visit the Creation Museum in Covington, Kentucky where there are numerous displays that debunk the theory of Evolution. Nearby is the Ark Encounter, a part of the Creation Museum – that shows how Noah’s Ark would have satisfied all the Arks Biblical requirements.
- The websites “apologeticspress.org” and the Institute for Creation Research (icr.org) have information that helps explain the universal law of cause and effect, which states that for every effect, there has to be a cause. For the evolutionist, this causes a really big problem since if the universe came into existence out of nothing, what caused that to happen. No matter how they try to answer it, they cannot do so without admitting it was by design, and design requires a designer.
- Creation Ministries International (creation.com) gives clear evidence of Intelligent Design by showing how the life cycle of a butterfly stumps scientists. Metamorphosis – the complete change of a butterfly’s body through the reorganization of its cells – cannot take place without an intelligent designer.

Besides these sites, we can re-learn the things we learned in high school and teach them to our children. For instance, photosynthesis – the mechanism by which trees and plants grow, is a process created by an intelligent designer. The same is true for animal life – everything from worms to elephants have bodies that had to start as complete systems.

Another source of evidence is that of answered prayer. Talk to your children about things God has done for you. If you have concrete evidence of God’s intervention, show it. Put it on the mantle; wear it around your neck; hang it on the wall. Let it be a physical reminder of how God has blessed your life and the lives of your children.

In addition, you can solicit stories of answered prayer. If you are aware of an example of answered prayer, ask that person to write about it, then share those stories with your children. Along those same lines, there are numerous movies available that document answered prayers. A person does not have to be part of Hebrew Roots or even be a Sabbath keeper to have answered prayer. Remember the story of Naaman?

Armed with information like this and the physical reminders you provide, children can come to see that God is real.

Identify Who God’s People Are



In my early childhood, I always wished that I was a Jew. Why wouldn't I? The Church of Christ pastor as well as the Sunday school teachers taught that the Jews were "God's Chosen People". In my ten year old mind that seemed to be a better option than being a "Gentile", who by default WOULD NOT be "God's Chosen People".

It was some time later before I realized that - yes, the Jews are God's chosen people, but they are just a fraction of them. When I found out that God called all of Jacob's sons His chosen people, and that Jacob had twelve sons - only one of which was a "Jew", my understanding of God and His plan began to open up. When I learned that God did not abandon His promises to Jacob; that He did not forsake His people for another people (the "church"), and most importantly - that He DID NOT CHANGE, my confidence in God grew immensely.

Just the fact that most Christians believe they are Gentiles is proof that God exists. Why? Because prophecy shows that in the end time, God people would believe they are Gentiles, and fulfilled prophecy is one of the greatest proofs God exists.

God told Israel in many places including Deuteronomy 4 and Hosea 1 & 2 that because of their idolatry, they would be scattered throughout the nations and cease to be a people. Today, the global population of those who claim to be Jews is estimated to be about 14 million people. This is a far cry from what it would be if God did indeed cause Jacob's descendant to be an innumerable number of people. But when you add in the estimated 2.3 billion⁴ Christians who – by the way – are the only other people who believe in the Judeo-Christian god – you have a significant number.

If indeed the Christians did – as Paul hinted⁵ - descend from the other Israelite tribes, it would only be right that they call themselves Gentile since – according to Bible prophecy - they would cease to be known as Israelites. But just because you are not known to be an Israelite does not mean you are not an Israelite. When a person comes to see this, God and the Bible really begin to make sense as we are more convicted that the Bible is Truth.

Young people want to belong to something. Give them something to really treasure ... being part of God's Chosen People.

Conclusion

Godlessness and the acceptance of deviant behavior is on the rise in America. Though the graphs now show both to be somewhat below 50% of the population, as the older generations are replaced by younger, the trend line will become steeper and steeper. In many ways, the future of our children depends on our willingness to stay tuned in to what is happening in our country and our culture. It depends on our willingness to teach them about God. It depends on us being willing to maintain a high level of Situational Awareness. By doing so, when times get rough and it is no longer fashionable to be a believer in the God of Israel, **they** will be able to say –

^{NKJ} **Joshua 24:15** "... as for me and my house, we will serve the YHVH."

Shalom Alecheim

⁴ 2015 estimate from Pew Research Center

⁵ Galatians 3:29